

# County considers costly White Flint Project

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ROCKVILLE — Montgomery County could spend more than \$400 million on building the proposed new White Flint community, according to the latest figures presented at a meeting with County Council and local developers last week.

“This plan is a very good plan — a plan that moves us to sustainable development, environmentally appropriate development and, at the same time, protects our existing neighborhoods that are immediately adjacent to White Flint,” Councilman Roger Berliner (D-Dist. 1) said following the approval of the plan by a unanimous council vote in March. The project will be located in his district — the area is bounded by Rockville Pike and Montrose and Randolph roads in North Bethesda.

The plan, which is expected to take up to 30 to 40 years to implement, will add around 9,800 residents to the White Flint area, along with 2,600 affordable housing units. The development will cover about 480 acres of land surrounding the White Flint Metro Station and will be focused on creating more mass public transit and allow residents and workers to leave their vehicles at home. Many older commercial buildings will be replaced over time with larger mixed-use facilities, some of them 30 stories tall.

“Instead of seeing a sea of asphalt, we’re going to have people walking the street,” Berliner said. “This is the future we imagine this plan bringing us, and I think we’re all pretty excited about it.”

Council members also debated just who will pay for the \$1 billion in public amenities that underlie a plan to make the area an economic engine. Financial analysts from County Executive Isiah “Ike” Leggett’s (D) office estimated the county will reap \$6.9 billion in tax revenues and impact fees from the city over the next 40 years. But their announcement also came with a list of specific infrastructure costs that have come up during the initial construction.

In October, Leggett proposed to council members that placing an additional property tax on White Flint would help generate \$208 million over the next 40 years and would help carry the costs.